(c) During 1988-89, the actual import by MMTC was about 1.66 lakh tonnes costing about Rs. 38 crores. For the year 1989-90, action has been initiated for import of about 2.8 lakh tonnes of pig iron for foundry and casting units costing about Rs. 90 crores as per the current indicative prices. In addition, MMTC is likely to import 2 lakh tonnes of basic grade pig iron from USSR, costing about Rs. 45 crores.

(d) The Public Sector Steel Plants have been asked to step up the production of pig iron in the current year to meet any shortage. Manufacture of pig iron has been delicensed. The private Sector is being encouraged to invest in pig iron production.

Allotment of rice to Tamil Nadu

1279. SHRI PASUMPON THA KIRUTTINAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of rice required by the Tamil Nadu from the Central pool;

(b) whether the requirement of that State is being fully met; if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Tamil Nadu Government has approached the Central Government to permit them to procure rice from the surplus States and also to import rice to meet their immediate reuirement; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) As against its monthly demand of 80,000 tonnes, Tamil Nadu is at present being allocated 40,000 tonnes of rice per month. Allocations of foodgrains from the central pool are only supplemental to the open market availability and are made on a month to month basis taking into account the overall availability of stocks in the central pool, relative needs of various states, market availability and other related factors.

(c) and (d) The Tamilnadu Government had requested for permission to make open market purchase of 3 lakh tonnes of rice from Andhra Pradesh in April, 1989. They have been permitted to purchase 1.5 lakh tonnes of levy free rice from the open market in Andhra Pradesh. No request from the Tamilnadu government has been received for import of rice.

Requirement of potash

1280. SHRI PASUMPON THA KIRUTTINAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the requirements of potash in our country;

(b) the requirements met with indigenous production and that being imported, with the names of the countries; and

(c) the amount of foreign exchange being spent annually for import of potash?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FERTILISERS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. PRABHU): (a) The estimated consumption (requirement) of potash in the country during the year 1987-88 and 1988-89 was 15.38 lakh tonnes and 18.97 lakh MT of material (MOP) respectively.

(b) The entire requirement of potassic fertilisers is met by imports as there are no known commercially viable sources of this material in the country. 13.4 lakh tonnes and 16.260 lakh tonnes of potash was imported during 1987-88 and 1988-89 respectively. Potash was imported from Canada, France, GDR, Holland, Jordan, USSR, W. Germany & Norway during 1987-88 and 1988-89.